

# Transforming USAREUR for a Strategy of Preemption

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UNITED STATES Army Europe (USAREUR) is not optimally configured to carry out its missions in the 21st century. The developing concept of rapid, decisive operations (RDO) to support the U.S. strategy of preemption requires USAREUR to be far different from the truncated version of V Corps that came into being after the Cold War era ended.

Federal budget deficits raise the question: can the United States afford to pay the cost of transforming the Army to defeat tomorrow's enemies and also maintain the Army's aging but still powerful current force to fight today's foes? The answer might be that the United States has no other choice. Ultimately, the Army must prepare for today *and* tomorrow.<sup>1</sup> The Army cannot afford to ignore the present or the future; to do so is to run the unacceptable risk of being unable to defeat enemies decisively in brief campaigns with low casualties. The Nation needs V Corps. Failure to transform USAREUR into a power-projection force risks the existence of the command and its two divisions.

## Does Europe Need V Corps?

America's strong European allies can fend for themselves on the ground, if necessary, given the current security environment.<sup>2</sup> Why keep a heavy corps in Germany when the Red Army will not be marching west?<sup>3</sup> After all, we deemed VII Corps unnecessary to defend Europe after the Persian Gulf war. And, after the Warsaw Pact collapsed, instead of returning to Germany or redeploying to the continental United States (CONUS), VII Corps was disbanded. Many Europeans are reluctant to support

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U.S. military missions. (The Germans in particular expressed this reluctance during their September 2002 elections.) This pressure might lead America to "reduce, redeploy, or even withdraw totally" V Corps and the rest of the Army in Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Because the Cold War has all but evaporated, does a secure Europe need V Corps? If not, should we deploy V Corps to Asia? Greater naval and air assets, not two surplus heavy divisions, seem better suited to address Asian security concerns. So, if we do not need V Corps in Germany or in Asia, do we need its two divisions at all?

Eliminating V Corps is a tempting course of action. Reducing personnel costs is the easiest way to pay for Transformation and the war against terrorism without hollowing out the current force.<sup>5</sup> Transformation envisions precision munitions linked to networks and reductions in Navy aircraft carriers, Air Force wings, and Army divisions.<sup>6</sup> Since Operation Allied Force in 1999 and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2001, the Army has come under pressure to downsize because precision firepower is seen as the way forward.

The Army failed to dispatch Task Force (TF) Hawk to Albania in a timely manner during Operation Allied Force and relied on the U.S. Special Operations Command to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan. Even the 3d Infantry Division's spectacular, rapid drive to Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom failed to impress observers with the

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power of U.S. Army heavy forces. Too many still view the conventional Army unfavorably and question its relevance.<sup>7</sup>

With USAREUR taking the point, the Army must defend its conventional role in RDO and preemption.<sup>8</sup> Before the events of 11 September 2001, the Army recognized the value of European forces for power projection.<sup>9</sup> European forces reduce mobility requirements and costs, warfighting risks, and the time required to deploy to trouble spots in Europe and Southwest Asia.

The war in Afghanistan and its surrounding states extended USAREUR's range of deployment eastward. A new interest in defending West African oil resources extends USAREUR's range of deployment southward along Africa's Atlantic coast. In July 2002, the deputy commander in chief of the U.S. Army European Command (EUCOM) visited Sao Tome and Principe, reportedly to discuss establishing a U.S. naval base there.<sup>10</sup> The two new areas added to USAREUR's range of deployment should increase USAREUR's value.

Unfortunately, Department of Defense officials, who ranked the value of U.S. military forces in Europe, rated the heavy V Corps last in terms of power projection. Army combat forces were deemed less important than Air Force aircraft and personnel, prepositioned equipment, and air bases (the most important).<sup>11</sup> The Corps' fate depends on a reshuffling of the deck in response to policies set forth in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*.<sup>12</sup> With the need to deploy the Army farther within EUCOM and to the Central Command, V Corps might never rank better than last.

## The Right Army for Europe

The real question is, how best can USAREUR contribute to peacetime engagements and warfighting missions? Configured with two heavy divisions, V Corps is designed—as V corps was during the Cold War—to fend off another war in Europe. With the Cold War over, the Army is hard-pressed to provide convincing reasons for V Corps' presence in Germany. (See figure 1.) Flimsy reasons are worse than none and make Army leaders look tradition-bound. The truth is the Army needs lighter, more strategically mobile troops in Europe.

V Corps should be based in CONUS where its heavy forces can more easily move between the Atlantic and the Pacific. The XVIII Airborne Corps should move to Germany to be closer to potential theaters more suitable for lighter forces. A Europe-based XVIII Airborne Corps could assume command of the 1st Infantry Division while returning the 1st Armored Division to CONUS for V Corps and deploying the 101st Airborne Division to Europe.

The XVIII Airborne Corps' 3d Infantry Division and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (reconstituted as a combat regiment) should become part of the CONUS-based V Corps, providing a heavy corps for another counterattack force. The remainder of XVIII Airborne Corps should stay in CONUS. The 82d Airborne Division could rotate a force through Italy to replace the Southern European Task Force's 173d Airborne Brigade, which would also come home.

The 10th Mountain Division would provide another source of infantry for European-theater missions. In time, Stryker brigades could replace

### Cold War European Alignment

**V Corps (USAREUR)**  
 1st Armored Division  
 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized)  
**XVIII Airborne Corps (CONUS)**  
 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)  
 82d Airborne Division  
 10th Mountain Division  
 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized)  
 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment (Light)  
 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

Figure 1.

Information adapted from the Association of the United States Army, *Army 2000-01 Green Book* (October 2000): 223-24, 230.



*V Corps should be based in CONUS where its heavy forces can more easily move between the Atlantic and the Pacific. The XVIII Airborne Corps should move to Germany. . . . Basing a large portion of XVIII Airborne Corps and strategically and tactically mobile Stryker brigades in Europe would reduce the distance the corps and the brigades would have to travel to reach crisis spots, saving priceless time.*

two of the 1st Infantry Division's heavy brigades. The division's third brigade in CONUS would remain a heavy force, retaining its equipment in Germany. (See figure 2.)

### The XVIII Airborne Corps in Europe

Dispatching the XVIII Airborne Corps to Europe and recalling V Corps would benefit the entire Army and strengthen the force for the missions it might carry out in the future.<sup>13</sup>

**Preserving warfighting.** Deploying anything less than a corps in Europe would create a force with no capacity for decisive, sustained action, and such a force would be correctly perceived as nothing more than a token force. A heavy armor capability (from the 1st Infantry Division) to bolster the corps' light mechanized force and light infantry would be necessary.

Because the power of heavy armor to awe enemies will not soon diminish, the Army should not abandon the capability to hit hard. Pre-positioned materiel for the heavy brigade should suffice as a hedge against a resurgent ground threat to European security. Basing V Corps in CONUS provides another heavy corps uncommitted to any theater, thus enhancing the ability to respond to two major theater wars (MTWs). With III Corps and V Corps

available for the heavy punch, responding to and deterring a second MTW would be easier.

**Enhancing presence.** A U.S. commitment to Europe in corps strength is still necessary despite the reduced threat level in Europe. The option to withdraw U.S. troops should simply not be part of the debate. A free, friendly, prosperous Europe is vitally

## Strategy of Preemption Alignment

### XVIII Airborne Corps (USAREUR)

- 1st Infantry Division (Germany)
- 101st Airborne Division (Germany)
- 82d Airborne Division (CONUS)
- 10th Mountain Division (CONUS)
- 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment (CONUS)

### V Corps (CONUS)

- 1st Armored Division (CONUS)
- 3d Infantry Division (CONUS)
- 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (CONUS)

Figure 2.

Information adapted from the Association of the United States Army, *Army 2000-01 Green Book* (October 2000): 223-24, 230.



Elements of the 1st Infantry Division providing security in Kirkuk, Iraq, 18 April 2003.

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important to America. The contrasting lessons of abandoning Europe after World War I and defending it after World War II argue for continued engagement. That a second world war occurred after the U.S. withdrew from Europe early in the last century speaks volumes.

A robust USAREUR prevents a security vacuum. The European Union could modify or alter trans-Atlantic relations in ways that are not clear today. If the Army withdraws the corps, the Army is unlikely to send the corps back, and even if a clear threat arises, many in America and in Europe would argue that such a move would be "provocative." That USAREUR must remain in Germany is not written in stone, although this might be difficult to grasp after a half century of defending NATO's front line at the Fulda Gap.

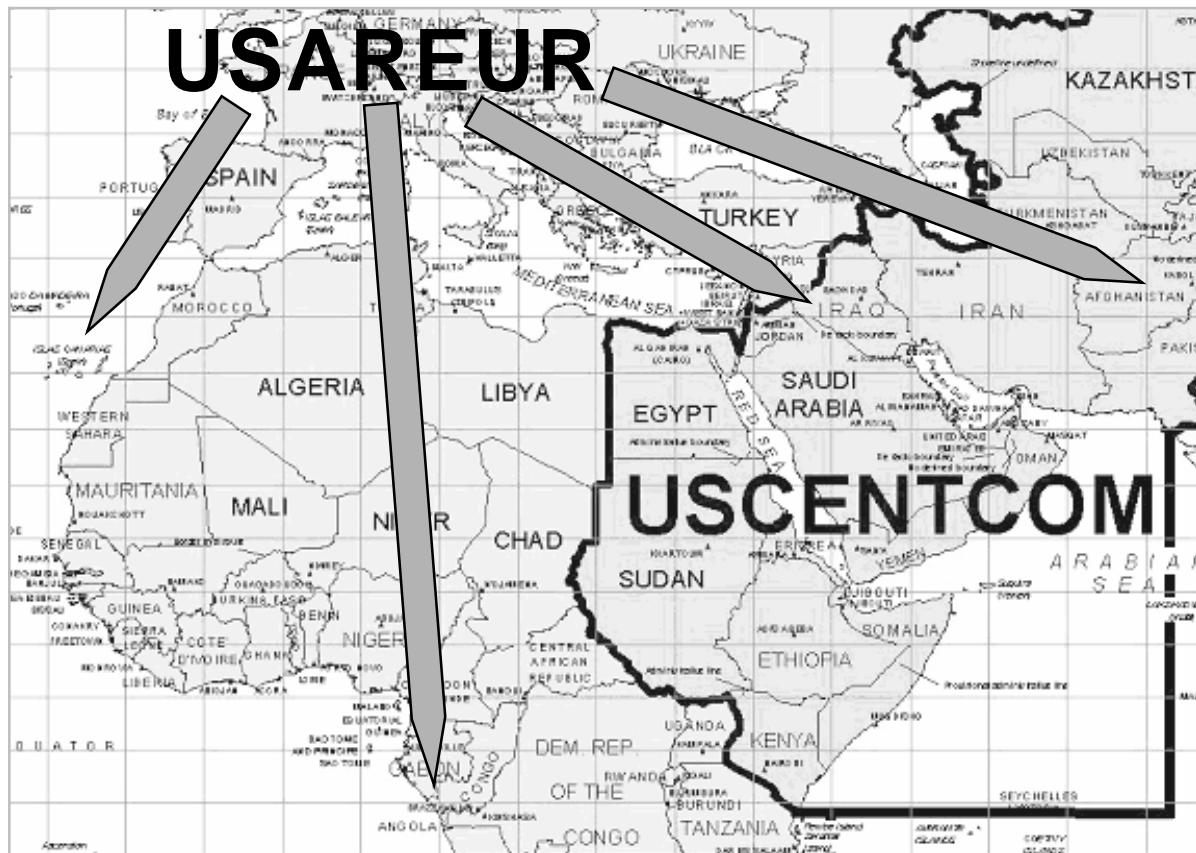
Newer NATO states might be eager to host the XVIII Airborne Corps. Given growing German restlessness, moving the bulk of U.S. ground forces out of Germany is not out of the question. The U.S. was concerned enough about German anti-American rhetoric during the September 2002 German elections to move command and control functions and bombers out of Germany to minimize the chance that the U.S. might be hamstrung in a crisis if the German government carried out a "political stunt."<sup>14</sup> Germany's desire to repair relations after the election shows that the U.S. can strengthen trans-Atlantic relations.<sup>15</sup> Removing an irritant to the Ger-

mans without removing U.S. troops from Europe is a possible solution.

**Providing engagement.** The U.S. needs a corps in Europe to preserve security by building relationships through military-to-military engagement. Heavy forces are somewhat threatening in these missions because they are capable of sustained offensive combat operations. Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles are scary for anyone who remembers what occurred during Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Deploying the XVIII Airborne Corps' light infantry elements for exercises in the newly independent states in Russia's "near abroad" would be less threatening, would help build relationships with the new states, and would blunt Russian arguments against U.S. influence.

Stryker brigades and the corps' 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment (Light), which is scheduled to become a Stryker brigade, could deploy wheeled vehicles on Europe's road network more easily than could tracked units. Exercises in the NATO states near Russia would reassure these states that they are no less deserving of protection than nations admitted to NATO earlier. The exercises might help dispel the notion that two tiers of NATO countries exist and that only the older tier is important.

Light units would also rebut Russian arguments that portray NATO as a threat to Russia and would help Russia embrace a firmer friendship with the West. Having another uncommitted heavy corps in



USAREUR could be called into action anywhere within a vast area throughout Atlantic Command and adjacent Central Command.

Figure 3.

CONUS might reassure U.S. allies around the globe that they will not be left to fend for themselves if the second MTW occurs on their terrain.

**Increasing relevance for real-world missions.** For better or worse, the Balkans will continue to be a concern for USAREUR. Stability operations are a basic mission the Army must undertake even as the Army prepares for diverse warfighting missions. The XVIII Airborne Corps' large infantry component makes the corps more suitable for the long-term challenge of policing the Balkans alongside U.S. allies. The 101st Airborne Division has the resources to successfully conduct a TF Eagle-type deployment as part of a joint response to a small-scale threat.

USAREUR needs a rapid reaction force to bolster Balkans-based forces should they face hostilities. The Army is reducing the number of U.S. troops in the Balkans, but a sudden resurgence of hostility is always possible. A Stryker brigade could be the lead element in a rescue role, providing good firepower and mobility with reasonable protection for the threat level.<sup>16</sup> Other corps light infantry forces could be more easily transported into and within the

theater. Heavy armor is simply not needed in large numbers for European stability operations.

**Enabling power projection.** American bases in Europe already provide a stepping-stone for CONUS-based forces to use to deploy to trouble spots from Angola to central Asia. The strategy of preemption places a premium on rapidly moving a decisive force to overseas theaters. Technology has made the world smaller, but distance is not irrelevant. The Objective Force's goals are to deploy a brigade in 4 days, a division in 5 days, and 5 divisions in 30 days. Deploying from CONUS, the XVIII Airborne Corps has a long way to travel in a short time to meet the Objective Force's deployment goals. Being closer would be of great value in meeting these time lines and objectives.

The vast region from West Africa through North Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, to Central Asia is a large area of potential crises—and some actual ones—as when, in September 2002, U.S. forces deployed from Germany to Africa's Ivory Coast where a mutiny threatened U.S. citizens' safety. The following four situations require U.S. forces to be able to move in RDO:

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□ Ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq against terrorists and regime remnants.

□ Possible preemptive wars against states with weapons of mass destruction.

□ The possible requirement to defend allies suddenly under threat from internal or external enemies.

□ The possible requirement to deploy sizable, lethal Army forces to West Africa to protect oil resources in that region.

Basing a large portion of XVIII Airborne Corps and strategically and tactically mobile Stryker brigades in Europe would reduce the distance the corps and the brigades would have to travel to reach crisis spots, saving priceless time. (See figure 3.) If the corps and the brigades moved farther east into newer NATO states, they would be even closer to major crisis spots. So what if the units are farther from the Pacific Theater? Do we really want them to defend the demilitarized zone against North Korean heavy armor? Except for Korea, the Pacific region is really the U.S. Marine Corps' domain for a rapid response ground force. Except for China, the rest of Asia is not likely to pose a threat that the U.S. Marine Corps cannot initially handle.

In the Western Hemisphere, the U.S. can still respond to crises in a timely fashion with the bulk of the 82d Airborne Division and the 10th Mountain Division. The 173d Airborne Brigade, Stryker brigades, the U.S. Army Rangers, and the Marine Corps would add to the available force pool.

## Debate Far From Over

"The Defense Planning Guidance" for 2004 to 2009 sets forth a vision of Transformation that downgrades the importance of conventional Army forces and emphasizes "high-value precision strikes" to disarm an enemy through distant firepower.<sup>17</sup> The *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* states clearly that to support preemption, the Nation will "continue to transform our military forces to ensure our ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results."<sup>18</sup> The problem with this approach is that it could easily be interpreted as meaning ever larger salvos of joint direct-attack munitions delivered by Missouri-based B-2s. Successful precision strikes simply destroy weapons and infrastructure; they leave the enemy rulers' evil intent intact.

Preemption requires troops to march on an enemy capital and carry out regime change. Because USAREUR is the Army command most vulnerable to the argument that its units are no longer relevant, USAREUR must change dramatically. Bolstering USAREUR's utility will rebut most arguments for a smaller Army. For military leaders committed to a full-spectrum military that preserves the role of ground forces, reconfiguring USAREUR is critical. Placing the XVIII Airborne Corps under USAREUR and basing V Corps in CONUS will guarantee visible and valuable Army roles in Europe's defense and in global power projection to support preemption long after the Red Army is a dim memory.

A debate about USAREUR is necessary. Unfortunately, the debate seems to be addressing only one question—does America need V Corps to defend its interests in Europe at all? The real debate should be about what units should make up the Army's future Europe-based corps. Exchanging USAREUR's V Corps with the CONUS-based XVIII Airborne Corps would serve U.S. interests, highlight the Army's role in maintaining European stability, and contribute to the Army's global reach to support the strategy of preemption. **MR**

## NOTES

1. Department of Defense (DOD), "Report of the Secretary of the Army," *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 2001), 253.

2. I say this with full awareness of U.S. dominance of Operation Allied Force and knowing that U.S. ground forces would have been the main force had NATO invaded Yugoslavia. Nonetheless, Europe could have done the job if Europe had been willing to suffer the heavier casualties that its inferior (compared to U.S.) capabilities might have caused, either in the air or on the ground.

3. Jim Hoagland, "Fog of Peace," *Washington Post*, 16 August 2001, A25.

4. Hoagland, "Cooling Off After Germany's Election," *Washington Post*, 26 September 2002, A33.

5. Thom Shanker, "Defense Chief May Leave Size of Field Forces Up to Services," *New York Times*, 17 August 2001.

6. Thomas E. Ricks, "Military Cuts Are Implied in New Strategy," *Washington Post*, 25 July 2001, A01.

7. For example, in searching for lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom, the principle of "mass" is questioned in favor of "precision." This clearly questions the role of the Army as being more than spotters for air power. See John G. Morgan and Anthony D. McIvor, "Rethinking the Principles of War," *Proceedings* (October 2003): 35-36.

8. U.S. Joint Forces Command, "A Concept for Rapid Decisive Operations," White paper, version 2.0, Norfolk, VA, 25 October 2001; The White House, *The National Security*

*Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, September 2002), 13-16.

9. General Accounting Office (GAO) 02-99, *Military Readiness: Effects of a U.S. Military Presence in Europe on Mobility Requirements* (Washington, DC: GPO, November 2001), 4.

10. Ellen Knickmeyer, "U.S. Leads Oil Boom in 'Other Gulf,'" *The Associated Press*, 19 September 2002.

11. The appointment of U.S. Marine Corps General James Jones to be NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, highlighted the need to transform USAREUR into a power-projection force. His appointment was reportedly part of President George W. Bush's goal to "shake off Cold War military thinking." See John Chalmers, "Corrected: NATO Makes Marine General Jones Top Soldier," *Reuters*, 19 July 2002.

12. *National Security Strategy*.

13. DOD Report, 247-54.

14. John Fund, "Herr Clinton," *Wall Street Journal*, 26 September 2002.

15. Steven Erlanger, "Rumsfeld Urges NATO To Set Up Strike Force," *New York Times*, 25 September 2002.

16. GAO, *Military Transformation: Army Actions Needed to Enhance Formation of Future Interim Brigade Combat Teams* (Washington, DC: GPO, May 2002), 17.

17. John Headren, "High Tech Strategy Guides Pentagon Plan," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 July 2002.

18. *National Security Strategy*.